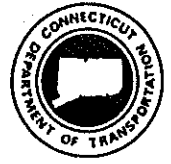




# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



Office of the  
Commissioner

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### **Public Hearing – February 23, 2015 Transportation Committee**

#### **Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker Department of Transportation**

#### **SB 833 – An Act Concerning Notice to Allow for Public Comment Prior to Tree Cutting by the Department of Transportation.**

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) offers the following comments on S.B. 833 which requires CTDOT to provide notice to towns to allow for public comment before cutting trees on state roads.

CGS 13a-140 allows the Commissioner to "cut, remove or prune any tree, shrub, or other vegetation situated wholly or partially within the limits of any state highway so far as reasonably necessary for safe and convenient travel thereon."

The removal of trees within the state right of way is a necessity in maintaining a safe and efficient highway system. Dead, dying or structurally impaired trees have the potential to fall into the highway and injury or kill traveling motorists. Trees within the clear zone are hazards to vehicles leaving the paved surface. The removal of trees also helps to mitigate icy road conditions by allowing sunlight to enter into shady locations.

Approximately 40,000 trees are removed within the state right of way on an annual basis by department personnel and contractor's hired to do tree removal. This work is needed to maintain safe clear zones for travel as well as preclude trees from falling into the highway system. Allowing public comment and hearings to occur prior to removal of trees would create potential safety concerns to the motor public, expose the State to additional liability, and delay necessary work from being completed.

It is important to note that the Department's Office of Maintenance Guidelines for Tree Maintenance Removal delineates responsibilities and procedures for tree removal. Property owners are advised prior to starting tree pruning or removal operations in front of dwellings or places of business. Highway boundary line trees are not removed without the abutting property owner's consent.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato ([pamela.sucato@ct.gov](mailto:pamela.sucato@ct.gov)) or CJ Strand ([carl.strand@ct.gov](mailto:carl.strand@ct.gov)) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.